# Year 11 Psychology Activities

Psychology is a subject that investigates us as human beings. It is a subject that requires a broad range of skills from scientific planning and investigation to reading and critically evaluating / debating to statistical analysis of data. These activities are designed to show you each aspect of Psychology to prepare you for the A Level, should you decide to take it.

## Consolidation of GCSE studies:

Although you have not studied Psychology at GCSE you could prepare for the A level by:

* Reviewing your lessons and notes from Biology on the nervous system as this is relevant to Psychology.
* Making sure your maths skills are up to speed (particularly % increase and % decrease, mean, median, mode and range, ratios and probability, all charts and graphs and scattergrams). You will need all these.

## Psychology is a subject that relates to ‘real-life’.

**Activity 1:** Keep a scrapbook (digital or paper) of articles in the news that are linked to how people behave, how they think, what motivates them etc. Annotate each article with a summary of the main points and create a glossary of terms that are new to you. You should find at least one article per week.

Use the following sources:

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)

[www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk) [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)

Searches in the science, health, family and business sections may be useful or use the search box and enter ‘psychology’. I recently found an article on ‘The Psychology of Panic Buying’!

## Psychology involves studying our amazing brain.

**Activity 2:** a. Research and make a table of notes on the following ways of studying the brain: MRI scan, fMRI scan, EEG and Post-Mortem. You will need to find out what these abbreviations mean first! Make sure you include strengths and weaknesses of each method.

b. Create a drawing/picture of the brain. It can be a scientific drawing in cross section or even an artistic representation using any medium, digital or otherwise. The best ones will be used to decorate the classroom. Spend some time learning about the different parts of the brain and their function ; it will really help you in your A level.

c. Visit the website [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com) and read ‘10 things we learned about the brain in 2019’. Choose your three favourite and write a summary of each finding.

## Psychology involves critically analysing evidence for different explanations of behaviour.

**Activity 3: Investigate the question: ‘are criminals born or made?’** You should produce a 500-1000 word essay considering this question and weighing up the arguments and the evidence. The ‘born’ side of the argument (nature) suggests criminal behaviour is influenced by genetics or the brain, or nervous system malfunctions. The ‘made’ side of the argument (nurture) suggests that criminal behaviour is influenced by personality, dysfunctional thinking (cognition) or learning and environment. What will your conclusion be? In Psychology you have to give a measured conclusion based on the weight of the evidence for each side and not on personal opinion. You might like to include a case study of a serial killer or other famous criminal in your work, as an example.

A good source of explanations is [www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-forensic.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-forensic.html)

## Psychology involves investigating human behaviour

**Activity 4:** Design a study to investigate whether there is an association or relationship (correlation) between time spent outdoors and happiness. Run your design by me and we can decide whether you can go ahead and carry it out for real. Think about something you can do in ‘lockdown’. You might use Microsoft Forms, for example. To be able to do a correlation each participant in your study needs to provide you with ‘time spent outdoors’ and ‘happiness’ measured on a numerical scale (a score). I can help you with this. Prepare a presentation about your study and your findings.

## Stretch and Challenge: Psychology requires lots of reading

**Activity 5:** Read one (or more) of the following books and write a review of no more than 250 words for each. They are quite tough, but very interesting.

‘The Brain;The Story of You’ by Brian Eagleman, Published by Canongate Books in 2016

‘Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole; Extraordinary Journeys into the Human Brain’, by Allan Ropper and BD Burrell, published by Atlantic Books in 2014.

## For books on other topics in Psychology please ask.

## Keep in touch and ask for help if you need it or if you have any questions. Enjoy your first step into Psychology.